

Later on, it was believed that the gods were not able to use anything that was not purified and etherialized by burning it in fire ("by smoke" or "*per fumum*") and that the gods could appreciate an offering only by the sense of smell, of odors that ascended to them in heaven.

The original idea was to offer food to the gods, and either the whole of the animal or only certain parts were burned on the altars. Thus, it is believed that in many sacrifices only the pelvis with the sexual parts, or perhaps only the one bone of the pelvis, the sacrum, with the attached sexual parts was an offering to the gods, and that the name of the bone, the "sacred bone," was derived from its use in burnt offerings.

The parts of the sacrificial animal not offered as a burnt offering to the gods was eaten by the priests or the worshippers.

Among some people only the blood was offered as a sacrifice (as among the Aztecs) or the fat and the thighs (*os sacrum*?) or the blood, fat and kidneys.

God commanded the Jews (Levit. ii, 13), "and every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offerings; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."

Salt is also an ingredient of holy water in the church.

The parts ordered to be offered to God were forbidden to the Jews to eat (Lev. vii, 26, Lev. iii, 17).

In India the sacrifice was accompanied by libations of wine, or *soma*.

Certain animals could not be offered because they were "unclean;" others not, because they were sacred, as the cow to Isis, in Egypt, or the goat to Athena, in Greece.

Among the Greeks the worship of Athena (Fig. 75) was introduced by the Aegidae, or "goat-clan," and Athena was represented as dressed in an aegis or goat skin, like Zeus. Athena therefore was of the goat-clan (see Totemism, p. 127), and as in all totem tribes who can not eat their totem (be it animal or vegetable), so Athena could not eat her totem or a member of her own clan, that of the goat; to have offered goat sacrifices to her would have been equivalent to cannibalism.

The book of Leviticus is full of directions of what animals to offer as sacrifices; as burnt offerings, cattle (a male without a

blemish), sheep or goats (a male without a blemish), fowls (turtle-doves or young pigeons); or fine flour, oil, frankincense, unleavened cakes, fruits; but leaven (yeast) or honey were forbidden to be used as offerings.

But for peace-offerings animals of the herds or flocks, either male or female (without blemish) were permitted.

Human sacrifices were common among Semitic nations, including the Jews; thus, Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac, but when he was about to do so, an angel interfered and ordered him to substitute a ram (Gen. ch. xxii, 1-13).

A peculiar form of sacrifice consisted in cutting off the pre-

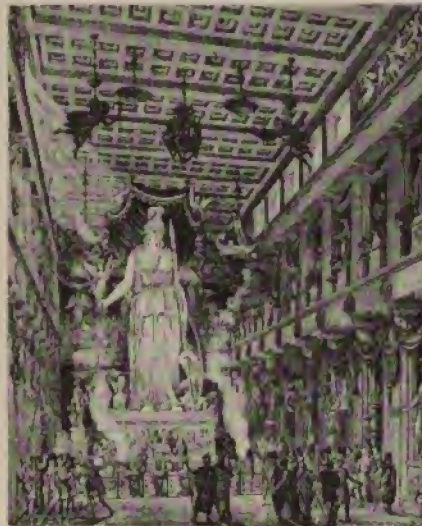


Fig. 75.—Burning incense before Athena. Interior of the Parthenon restored.

puce, or foreskin of the penis; this was done by different nations, but it was especially enjoined on the Jews as a religious covenant with God. It was a sacrifice of a small part of the body that the balance might be saved, for dire punishment was threatened against those who were not circumcised (Gen. xvii, 14).

It is interesting to note that what are now considered purely vices, are survivals of religious ceremonies of former days. In olden times, for instance, the priest had to take the penis he circumcised in his mouth and suck it, as a part of the ritual. This was forbidden in the days of Napoleon, because syphilis was conveyed by the mucous patches on the lips of some of the operators.

Originally circumcision was probably a sacrifice to the Power of Procreation, which was supposed to reside in the penis, or to be symbolized by the penis.

Orthodox Jews still practice circumcision as a religious rite, it having the place that baptism of the Christians holds.

Also, the Bible tells us that Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: "if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, \* \* \* shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering."

And when he came back, his daughter met him, and \* \* \* "Jephthah did with her according to his vow which he had vowed." Writers have tried to explain away the hideousness of this story by saying that Jephthah dedicated her to the service of God; but there is no use to apologize for the statements in the Bible;—"I will offer it up for a burnt-offering"—and—"Jephthah did with her according to his vow" are statements too unequivocal to admit a doubt of his having slaughtered her and burnt her body as an offering to God Jehovah (provided we accept all that is in the Bible as truth).

And stress is laid on the fact that she was a virgin, therefore an exceptionally acceptable sacrifice.

During the idolatry of the Jews, they offered their children as burnt offerings to Molech, the deity of the Philistines. These children were offered like any other offerings, slaughtered, cut up and burnt; they were not burned alive. The latter practice, however, was prevalent at one time in Carthage; and every now and then in our own communities some religious fanatic imagines he has been commanded by the Lord to sacrifice one of his children, and either attempts to do so, or succeeds in doing so; only, instead of it being regarded as an act approved by God, as in Abraham's case, we now call such a person insane and lock him up.

Among the Phoenicians human sacrifices were offered on great occasions, and usually a first-born and only son was chosen for the purpose. This was because an offering was supposed to be acceptable to a god in proportion as it was valued by the worshippers. It was thought that deities delighted in and demanded the costliest and holiest gifts, and this led to the dedication of virgins as gifts to temples of Astarte to become temple attendants

(or temple prostitutes) in the groves of this goddess, and sometimes virgins or matrons (wives) were given, to be sacrificial offerings.

In later times these human sacrifices were only figuratively carried out; for instance, women cut off and burnt their hair as an offering, instead of being themselves the sacrificial victims.

In a similar manner in ancient Egypt, when the inundation of the Nile occurred (the Nile was a divinity) a maiden was thrown into the Nile as a sacrificial offering; later on, when human sacrifices were no longer required, a waxen image of a



Fig. 76.—“Cain Kills Abel,” from Doré's Bible illustrations.

maiden was thrown into the flood; at present, the water is controlled by dams and locks. When it is to be allowed to flow out over the land, a pillar of mud is erected in front of the floodgate, which is called “the bride of the Nile” and serves in place of the living human victim offered by the ancients.

Cain killed Abel because the smoke of the latter's offering ascended straighter to heaven than that of his own, or what was the same thing to Cain, because Abel's sacrifice was more acceptable to God than his own (Fig. 76).

“Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord (Gen. iv, 3),



"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering,

"But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Gen. iv, 4, 5).

That God might not respect their offerings seems to have been much dreaded by the ancient Jews, for God threatens (Lev. xxvi, 31): "And I will make your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries into desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odors."

Among ancient people the idea here stated seemed to be generally accepted that the gods preferred bloody sacrifices, because they delighted in the smell of blood; and since such offerings were acceptable in proportion as they were valuable to the worship-



Fig. 77.—Achilles sacrificing to the manes of Patrocles; from the Fancois tomb, near Vulci.

pers, human offerings, the offerings of firstborn sons or of virgin daughters were the holiest.

After all, the idea that the gods preferred virgins was perfectly natural; all mankind has a special regard for virgins. And if any of us were invited to a feast, such as a sacrifice was supposed to be for the gods, we would be like the gods in appreciating tender "chickens." Among the cannibals of Central Africa, tender young women, properly fricasseed, are still considered a special treat and delicacy.

Among the ancient Greeks at one time human offerings were not unusual. This (Fig. 77) represents Achilles sacrificing to the shade of his ancestor Patrocles at the siege of Troy (after sculptures in an old Grecian tomb).

Agamemnon had in some way offended the goddess Artemis, who demanded that he offer his daughter Iphigeneia in expiation. When he was about to sacrifice Iphigeneia, the goddess relented and ordered a hind to be substituted for Iphigeneia (the same story as that of Abraham offering Isaac), but she took Iphigeneia and made her a priestess in a temple of Artemis. According to some versions of this story, Iphigeneia was actually sacrificed.

Polyxena was a daughter of Priam, old Greek legends say. Priam was the last king of Troy and Heecuba was the mother of Polyxena. She had been betrothed to Achilles, and after the



Fig. 78.—“The Rape of Polyxena,” by Fedi; now in Florence, Italy.

destruction of Troy and the death of Achilles, the ghost of the latter appeared to the Greeks and demanded of them the sacrifice of Polyxena. The Greeks consented and Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, seized and sacrificed Polyxena on his father's grave (Fig. 78).

Similar was the story of the maidens offered to the Minotaur.

In early times the Greeks also made human sacrifices to Artemis (the moon).

In Rome sacrifices were offered to various deities; male animals to gods and female animals to goddesses. The *Penates*

were the Roman gods of the storehouse of food, the larder or cupboard. The family hearth was their altar, on which as already stated, a portion of the daily food was offered to them. They were always accompanied by the *Lares* or ancestral gods, who remained as household deities; to them also offerings of food were made.

The serving of food and drink to household spirits prevailed in Russia, Germany, Lapland, Servia, etc. In Russia, or rather in Siberia, this took a peculiar form. The Russians who had been banished to Siberia believed (or at least pretended to believe) that ancestral spirits visited them in their exile, and they set food outside of their windows every evening for them. In reality,



Fig. 79.—A Druidic human sacrifice.

this food was intended for prisoners who had escaped from the mines, and who dared not come in daytime to beg food, and to whom the people would not have dared to give food. The offerings for their "ancestral visitors" outside of their windows were occasionally accompanied by little gifts of money and were intended to help the unfortunates on their way to freedom.

Young maidens, or virgins, were especially acceptable sacrifices to the gods, and were offered by the ancient Druids (Fig. 79) as well as by the Greeks; and the custom extended to nearly all parts of the world.

Until quite recently (last century) a virgin was sacrificed annually to Pelée, the female demon deity of the volcano Kilauea,

by being thrown from the edge of the crater into the seething lake of lava below. A hair-like substance is often found in Hawaii which is called "Pelée's hair;" it is a sort of mineral or slag wool, made by lava being ejected from the volcano, and blown by the wind into threads.

Prescott tells us that the Aztecs, in the times of the Conquest of Mexico, sacrificed annually many thousands of human victims to their blood-thirsty God of War, who delighted in the odor of fresh blood.

This illustration (Fig. 80) is copied from an old painting in a temple of Mexico, showing the method of making these human sacrifices. Several temple attendants, who were made more hideous by painting their bodies black, seized the victim and stretched him on his back over a convex altar stone, whereupon the priest

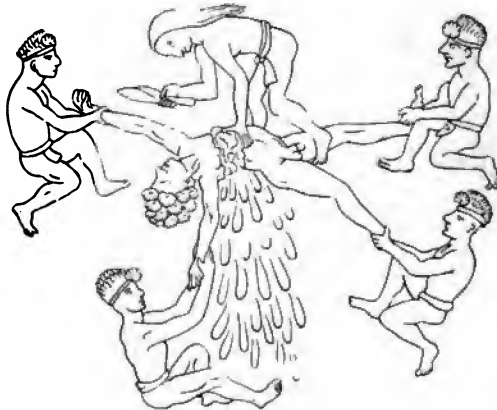


Fig. 80.—Aztec sacrifice, from Kingsborough's Mexican Antiquities.

made an incision and quickly tore the heart from the body and held it up to the idol, so that Huitzilopochtli might smell the fragrance of the warm and palpitating heart and of the blood.

The bodies were then thrown down among the worshippers, and afterwards were roasted and eaten.

We learn from the Bible that, of the Jewish offerings, some were completely burned, of others only a few parts were burned and the remainder served as food for the temple attendants or could be carried back and eaten by the ones who had made the offerings; the blood in every case, however, was sprinkled over the altar as a grateful offering to the nostrils of Jehovah, and the



Jews were forbidden to eat blood. Aromatic resins, or incense, and salt was added to the parts that were burned on the altars.

The ancient Egyptians filled the carcasses of their burnt offerings with spices, raisins, etc., to render the odor, the only part that ascended to heaven, more acceptable to the gods. It also rendered the sacrificial animals, which were roasted, not burned, more acceptable to the priests and temple attendants whose perquisites they were, and who feasted on them. The Egyptians also burned only a small part for the gods, probably the sacrum with the sexual parts.

The word *kethoreth*, used by the ancient Jews for incense, meant "savor of satisfaction." It was used as among the ancient Egyptians, from whom the Jews obtained many of their ideas during their captivity in Egypt.

The modern use of consecrated candles, or of incense, in our churches, is but an innocent survival of former more bloody and cruel sacrifices.

In the 35th verse of the thirtieth chapter of Exodus, in the Bible, incense is also called a "confection made after the art of the apothecary," which modern scholars say should rather have been translated: "a perfume (or incense) made after the art of the perfumer."

This verse refers to the burnt offering incense of the ancient Jews, which seems to have had a twofold purpose: First, to render the actual burnt offering, that part of the sacrificial animal which was consumed by fire on the altar, more acceptable to the nostrils of God; second, to render it less offensive to the worshippers in the temple.

Incense was, and is, used among the Hindus in the same way and for the same purposes as among the ancient Jews. The Hindus formerly used frankincense, but now they generally use benzoin.

In ancient Roman temples the use of religious fumigations was common. It was probably continued from these Pagan practices by the primitive Christians, although direct testimony to this effect is wanting, for we find no mention of its use among the Christians until about the fifth century of our era.

At present there is no fixed rule for the making of incense for church purposes; it is, however, recommended that, whenever possible, frankincense (*olibanum*) shall constitute more than one-

half of the mixture. It is especially recommended that no inferior substance, if used at all, shall preponderate.

In Rome, olibanum is used alone; in other places benzoin, storax, aloes, cascarilla, cinnamon, cloves or musk, or a combination of several of these are added to the olibanum.

In the Russian branch of the Greek Catholic church the incense consists mainly of benzoin, as among the Hindus; and in the Armenian branch of the Greek Catholic church incense is usually a mixture of myrrh and cinnamon.

An inscription in the Valley of Hammamat records that Hannu was sent by the Pharaoh Sankharra, about 2500 B.C., or 1000 years before Moses, by the route of the Red Sea southward to Punt (modern Somaliland) on the eastern coast of Africa, to bring back odoriferous gums to be used in the temples for incense, and for embalming the dead. An inscription in the temple at Der-el-Bahri shows the bringing of goods for Queen Hatshepsut, who had determined to import incense trees into Egypt, to attempt to raise their own incense for use in the temples.

The native products obtained from the Prince of Punt included aromatic woods, spices, incense, incense trees, other rare plants, gold, etc., for the temple of Thebes. The record states that an expedition was sent by Queen Hatshepsut (about 1600 B.C.) to bring incense trees from Punt, to be planted in the gardens connected with this temple, with the intention of producing incense.

In *Stones of Venice* Ruskin speaks of the "close air loaded with a sweet and peculiar odor associated only with religious services," as pervading the interior of the churches. The influence of incense in producing a devotional frame of mind has perhaps been experienced by most of us.

This mental disposition is to a great extent due to the inhalation of the volatilized terebinthinate constituents of the incense which produces an obscure yet perceptibly stimulant effect on the erection center; were the effect stronger it would excite distinct erotic emotions with erection, but as it is, it only produces religiously devotional emotions, arguing however the close relationship of our sexual and our religious passions.

Under the Emperor Constantine the burning of incense as a sacrifice was considered to be proof of Paganism, and was made a crime punishable with death.